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President:	Mr. DeLaurentis	(United States of America)
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	Russian Federation	Mr. Panin
	South Africa	Mr. Wensley
	Togo	Mr. Yagninim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

Securing borders against illicit cross-border trafficking and movement

Letter dated 5 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2012/195)

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The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Botswana and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to associate the views of my delegation with the contents of the letter (S/2012/257) sent yesterday by the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries relating to the agenda item for today's debate.

In that regard, I wish to reiterate that we believe that the Security Council must stay within its mandate as articulated in Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations and not delve into discussions that fall primarily within the functions and competencies of the General Assembly and other relevant organs of the United Nations.

The item before us today, and its related issues, is one of the most daunting challenges facing the international community today. Lax border controls pose major risks to the security and socio-economic state of all of our nations. The pervasive nature of transnational crime, including drug trafficking, terrorism, human trafficking, the illicit trade in arms and other forms of transnational crime, has made it an international problem that can be curbed only through collective and concerted efforts based on the principle of shared responsibility.

In most of the Council's deliberations on border-related issues, as manifested in a number of resolutions and presidential statements adopted over the past couple of years, there are references to the issue of drug trafficking that have focused specifically on the connection between drug production and security and terrorism and organized crime. In those decisions the Council recognized the need for the international community to come up with an integrated and balanced approach for addressing those problems based on the principle of responsibility.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, because of its location in a region of tension and conflict that is also considered a meeting point for illegal activities such as illicit trading in small arms, organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking, has incurred much damage resulting from such activities. However, Iran has spared no effort to combat such illegal activities, including preventing and combating the illicit trade in small arms and human trafficking and has made significant progress in that regard.

On the issue of controlling narcotic drugs, over the years the Islamic Republic of Iran has maintained many tens of thousands of military and disciplinary forces mobilized along its long border areas and has allocated billions of dollars to the fight against narcotic drugs. Iran has also strived to reinforce and reorganize the fortifications, facilities and intelligence control systems of its transit and border checkpoints in order to prevent the entry of trafficking caravans into the country.

All of those measures have resulted in the confiscation of massive volumes of various types of narcotics that have set records among opium and heroin seizures worldwide. We have shouldered a great burden, largely to deal with that threat. Given the fact that the menace serves to create a breeding ground for terrorism, Iran's efforts in that regard have undoubtedly also made a fundamental contribution to the global fight against terrorism.

On the issue of small arms and light weapons, we believe that States bear the primary responsibility for preventing and combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all of its aspects, including identifying and solving the problems associated with that trade. Taking that into account, we have developed and established a comprehensive set of laws, regulations, guidelines and directives in the Islamic Republic of Iran that enable relevant national authorities and agencies to prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its associated problems. Based on existing regulations, the illicit manufacturing, possession, storage or trade of any small arms is considered an offence and all individuals involved in such activities shall be arrested and punished accordingly.

Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, is one of the most serious manifestations of transnational organized crime. It is an affront to human

dignity and a modern form of slavery. Active cooperation at the global level should be developed in order to efficiently target the demand side of the problem. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a transit country, has also taken serious steps in implementing several projects on enhancing border control in order to better fight transitional organized crime, including human trafficking.

Before I conclude, let me emphasize the need for a review of the relevant regional and international policies and programmes in order to overcome shortfalls and effectively counter such global problems as illicit cross-border trafficking and movement. The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes once more its strong determination to combat those global problems and expresses its readiness to cooperate with other partners to resolve decisively such problems.

Finally, with regard to the baseless allegations made this morning against my country, in particular by the representative of the Israeli regime, I would like to mention that the representative of the Israeli regime, in line with the regime's warmongering and propaganda campaign against my country, has once again used this body to level baseless allegations against Iran.

That regime, with a history of criminal behaviour, referred to arms smuggling from Iran while, with its brutal, killing apparatus, that regime has embarked on many criminal acts, including State terrorism. A vivid example of that is the assassination of Iran's nuclear scientists.

The Israeli regime's baseless allegations against the peaceful nature of our nuclear activities is another attempt to divert the attention of world public opinion from its clandestine development and unlawful possession of hundreds of nuclear warheads, nuclear weapons arsenal and other weapons of mass destruction, which threaten the region as a whole and act against international peace and security.

I therefore do not deem it necessary to respond to those absurd allegations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): The illicit movement of people and goods across borders is as old as borders themselves. But the past two decades have seen unprecedented growth in the scale, scope and impacts of such movements and of the criminal networks that support them. They are complex, well-resourced networks that span continents and are sustained by illicit trafficking and movement of people, funds and goods.

We are now also seeing an alarming convergence of those networks. Constantly seeking points of weakness, they target jurisdictions with weak State capacity. Once established, they further undermine governance, public safety and development prospects and provide fertile ground for crime, instability and terrorism.

The very viability of States is often at risk, with the perpetrators posing serious threats to security and to stable democratic Government. No corner of the globe is beyond their reach, including my own region, the Pacific, which has been targeted by people smugglers, human and narcotics traffickers, and others.

We have learned much about what works in combating and disrupting these illicit networks, not least the importance of robust legislative frameworks, effective border and law enforcement institutions, and good governance for protecting our jurisdictions. But we have also learned that no country can meet these challenges alone. The multinational character and reach of these networks make international cooperation essential. And we have learned to look at those challenges through a broader lens, taking into account the drivers of demand for such activities and the links between different criminal activities.

In the Pacific, national responses have been coordinated through the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee, and through regional groupings of border control and law enforcement officials. New Zealand also supports its Pacific Island neighbours through bilateral capacity-building programmes. In partnership with the Forum Secretariat, we bring Pacific law enforcement officials together in an annual working group on counter-terrorism, which this year will address the link between terrorism and transnational organized crime. We participate actively in the Trans-Pacific Network on Dismantling Transnational Illicit Networks, and in other regional initiatives of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum. We contribute bilateral assistance to partners in South-East Asia. New Zealand and Australia have also partnered to fund the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime transnational

organized crime threat assessment for East Asia and the Pacific.

In June, building on our chairmanship of last year's meeting of governmental experts on small arms and light weapons, New Zealand will fund a workshop for our Caribbean Community partners on combating the illicit trade in firearms across borders, focusing particularly on maritime security issues, which have so far received insufficient attention within the United Nations.

More integrated and coherent capacity-building would be in everyone's interests, particularly those of small developing States that have the greatest need. In that regard, we should like to stress four points.

First, we should strengthen cooperation and coordination between United Nations agencies and with other international bodies that provide capacity-building. That cooperation must focus on providing consistent advice and more coherent capacity-building support, in line with national priorities. Practical steps could include enhanced information-sharing and more coordinated risk and needs assessments and priority-setting, as well as strengthened cooperation with relevant bodies, such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization.

Secondly, the United Nations should consider options for achieving more integrated delivery of assistance on the ground. International donors should support and respect national partners seeking to articulate their own priority needs. Regional organizations also have an important role to play in coordinating international assistance and aligning it with regional priorities. The United Nations should be making better use of such regional partnerships.

Thirdly, the Security Council should ensure more coordinated assistance within its own areas of responsibility. It could, for example, ask the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the Council advice relating to illicit trafficking and movements, and integrate these aspects into mission mandates where they threaten peace and security. This is particularly important in peacebuilding situations, where transnational criminal activity can be an obstacle to sustainable peace. The Council could also instruct its own committees and bodies to coordinate their work with other international actors.

Finally, we must view illicit trafficking and movements through a broader lens than just that of enhanced border controls. That point was well made this morning by the Ambassador of Costa Rica. While strengthening national border and law enforcement institutions is very important, they alone cannot stem the flow of illicit movements unless we contemporaneously address issues such as illicit financial flows and the factors that drive demand. Strengthened coordination of international policy and capacity-building is also required. We welcome recent steps in this direction, such as the establishment of a United Nations task force on transnational organized crime.

The criminal networks behind most illicit international activity have had devastating impacts on many communities. Their ever-expanding reach, sophistication and resources make confronting them a formidable challenge, but they must be confronted. We must ensure that countries and communities that find themselves on the front line of this struggle have the tools and the capacities that they need to do just that. More coordinated and integrated assistance has an important role to play in all of this, and New Zealand hopes that today's debate foreshadows a substantive and new step in that direction.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Jamaica.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have this special opportunity to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Let me at the outset thank you, Sir, for having organized today's open debate on the theme "Threats to international peace and security: securing borders against illicit flows". We also express appreciation for the presidential statement S/PRST/2012/16 that was adopted by the Council earlier today.

As a region that, due in part to its geography, is faced with the daily challenge of securing large, porous and remote sea and land borders against illicit flows of guns and ammunition, illegal drugs and the trafficking of persons, this matter is of particular relevance and importance to us. For CARICOM member States, the illicit flow of guns and ammunition, as well as illicit drugs, across our borders not only constitutes a crime and security challenge, but also represents an existential threat to our present way of life and current

efforts being undertaken to establish safe, secure and developed societies for our people.

In recognition of the interlinked nature of growing levels of crime and violence in the region fuelled by the illicit movement of drugs, guns and ammunition, it should be recalled that CARICOM leaders in 2007 established crime and security as the fourth pillar of the region's integration. CARICOM member States — both collectively, through the conclusion of the 2011 CARICOM Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and individually — have been undertaking a number of measures to secure our borders against illicit flows. In recognition of the potential cross-cutting gains that can be realized through securing our borders, border management and security have thus become one of CARICOM's major security priorities.

Through the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, and in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration, efforts have been undertaken in various CARICOM member States to harmonize and standardize policies, practices and procedures utilized by border security agencies throughout the region. In addition to the harmonization of policies, numerous training and educational programmes are also being undertaken. In conjunction with our bilateral partners, including most notably the United States through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, CARICOM Governments have been actively taking steps to protect our borders and our societies. Other regional partners that have contributed to our efforts to secure our borders include the Organization of American States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. I wish to express appreciation to the Ambassador of New Zealand for his country's recent assistance to and collaboration with CARICOM Governments.

While the major challenges facing our region are posed by illicit drugs, guns and ammunition, as States parties to the major international terrorism instruments and in view of our commitments to the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, CARICOM member States have also taken steps to secure our borders against the illicit flows of money and equipment that could also be used to commit acts of terror in the region or elsewhere.

At the international level, CARICOM member States have also advocated for greater attention to be given to the issue of border control as a component of the broader crime prevention measures, and specifically to prevent the flows of small arms and light weapons and ammunition to the region, in particular within the context of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. CARICOM has also long advocated that, if we are to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, we must also address the questions of ammunition and the cross-border movement of such weapons.

While Member States have been taking steps at the national and regional levels to secure their borders, much more work needs to be done at the international level. CARICOM is of the view that, given its long-standing experience, the United Nations has an important role to play in assisting Member States to improve their capacity in the area of border security and management, including in facilitating technical assistance.

While there has been significant attention focused on stemming the illicit flows of materiel that could be used to commit acts of terror across borders, similar high-level focus also needs to be directed towards stemming the illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and ammunition. In acknowledging the distinctions between the different categories of illicit items that flow across national borders, a more comprehensive approach to border management and security by the United Nations will, in our view, prove to be a more effective approach in the long run. We believe that greater symmetry in securing borders against the illicit flows of chemical, biological and nuclear material, as well as the illicit flows of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, will significantly contribute to the goal of international peace and security.

CARICOM agrees with the proposal outlined in the concept note (S/2012/195, annex) for an assessment to be conducted of the different United Nations structures, with a view to determining the extent to which they are meeting States' capacity-building needs in this vital area, as well as improving the Organization's ability to help Member States counter

illicit flows. At the same time, however, such a review, and attempts to address this issue in a holistic manner, should not lead to any contraction in the capacity-building programmes and projects currently afforded to Member States in this vital area.

Finally, we would also urge that, in the context of such a review, attention be paid to the specific challenges being faced among countries and regions in the design and delivery of future projects. In that context, we would reiterate our fervent hope that, on the basis of the ongoing discussions between CARICOM member States and UNODC, that the UNODC Caribbean regional office will soon be reopened. CARICOM remains convinced that the office will play a vital role in assisting countries of the region to build their capacity to reduce the illicit flows of guns, drugs and other materiel, including through strengthened border management and security and, in so doing, achieve our goals of a safe and secure region.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Nazarian (Armenia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this essential debate. We also join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing.

The frequency with which the Security Council addresses this issue signifies the urgency of the matter. Illicit cross-border flows are taking place on a massive scale and have an enormously harmful impact on security, human rights and social and economic development, in particular on developing countries. As such, securing borders against illicit flows must be a distinct aspect of the overall international peace and security agenda. Secure borders means non-proliferation; it means the compartmentalization of threats; and it means that threats are localized and their spread is prevented, making them much easier to overcome.

The enormity of the threat and its implications necessitate a multilayered approach. Moreover, the successful implementation of the strategic decisions that have been adopted to address the problem cannot be ensured without the coordinated action and support of the United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations dealing with transnational crime and, most important, extensive bilateral cooperation among all countries along the main trafficking routes.

On the national level, for the past decade Armenia has developed effective multilateral cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime and international terrorism. A network of bilateral agreements has been established with many countries. We also work closely with various regional international partners, such as the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), NATO and various United Nations agencies, in such areas as legal reform, improving national law enforcement capacities, border control and intelligence systems.

As a member of the CSTO, Armenia actively participates in its anti-drug operations. That multinational effort brings together not only member States, but also representatives from approximately two dozen States and international organizations. As a result of those efforts, operations carried out since 2003 have resulted in the confiscation of several tons of drugs in the CSTO region. Since 2008, those efforts have had the status of a standing regional anti-drug operation.

In full compliance with its international obligations, Armenia has firm control over its borders and prevents and thwarts any encroachment. In addition, last February, the working agreement between the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (Frontex) and the National Security Council of the Republic of Armenia established deeper cooperation between the relevant bodies of Armenia and Frontex to fight border crimes and enhance border security.

Secure borders are particularly important in volatile regions such as the South Caucasus, where still-unresolved conflicts have become a convenient excuse for the accumulation of enormous amounts of weaponry, very often in violation of existing treaties and agreements. Illicit flows of armaments, drugs and terrorist groups and terrorist activities remain a matter of concern in the most global sense. Despite the two-decades-long blockade of Armenia and the difficulties and challenges that has created, fighting illicit cross-border flows, and more specifically drug trafficking, Armenia, in cooperation with its partners, has spared no effort in applying preventive measures.

Armenia believes that prevention is the best defence against the spread of illicit cross-border

trafficking, which could also undercut the foundations for recruiting under any pretext. Through education, awareness-raising and improved legislation and implementation mechanisms, we can multiply the effectiveness of our efforts. In that respect, we pay great attention to the training and retraining of the officials working in the Government agencies dealing with counter-terrorism. We would like to express our gratitude to the United States and other partner countries for assisting us in that regard.

In conclusion, I cannot but agree with the statements made by previous speakers to say that no country can counter these problems alone. Their scope and magnitude require even greater levels of innovation and effective regional and international cooperation. We would therefore support the proposal for a diagnostic assessment by the Secretariat aimed at the evaluation and enhanced coordination of our joint efforts in this critical area.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): Organized groups and networks conduct ruthless, illegal activities in search of the highest possible profit from smuggling narcotic drugs, arms, minerals, toxic waste, counterfeit products and even human beings. Such crimes undermine development, ruin lives and threaten societies. Many transnational criminals are moving between licit and illicit markets and taking advantage of safe havens and using corruption and violence as tools to reach their goals of maximum profit. The cocaine flow from Latin America that is reaching West Africa and heading towards Europe is one example of how criminals exploit porous borders and weak customs and police control.

The challenge is to crack down on such criminals without hampering or reducing the legal trade. We must ensure that our hunt for criminals does not end up hurting us all, because that is what will happen if we impose general, rigid and time-consuming controls at borders for all goods and all people. It is therefore of great importance that a border strategy include measures for detecting illicit flows before they enter actual border areas. That will require close cooperation and an international exchange of intelligence among law enforcement and customs agencies. The Schengen cooperation of European countries is a tested example whereby borders are generally open but controls and arrests can take place at points along transportation routes. That avoids choke points and delays, which damage lawful trade and productivity.

The Secretary-General's renewed focus on the issue of transnational organized crime and the establishment of the United Nations System Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking are steps in the right direction. We expect that the Task Force will contribute significantly to strategic responses with regard to United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development activities. It has the potential for helping Member States to develop border management strategies that are conducive to developing the legal trade while strengthening their hand in dealing with illicit flows.

The strengthened focus on transnational organized crime in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Delivering justice: programme of action to strengthen the rule of law at the national and international level" (A/66/749), which will be discussed at a high-level meeting of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, is another step towards highlighting the need for effective law enforcement cooperation among countries. Close cooperation with other United Nations bodies, such as the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Security Council working groups, should serve to strengthen the United Nations in supporting States. International cooperation at the regional level — such as with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, which are supported by the United Nations and the international community — could be models to build on.

The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) has a key role in helping Member States to meet the threats stemming from transnational organized crime. INTERPOL's I-24/7 communications network and its databases of stolen passports and documents are core elements of border management. The World Customs Organization has a high level of competence in measures related to border control, and it should be a strong partner for the United Nations in building effective strategies.

We need stronger political commitments from Governments in all regions in order to move forward. Law enforcement cooperation is important, but there must also be sufficient focus and investment to tackle organized crime and terrorism.

In conclusion, Norway proposes that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, the Task Force on Transnational Organized Crime, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization come together with the aim of working out recommendations to improve measures to strengthen border management.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to say, respectfully, that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has chosen to take part in this debate even though we believe that the subject at hand does not belong on the Security Council's agenda. We caution that this is an attempt to continue to "securitize" the United Nations and usurp the competencies of other organs.

We are concerned by the attempt to address the issue of illicit flows under such different and unrelated headings — which are handled in quite a variety of ways within United Nations bodies — as illicit drug trafficking, conventional arms, smuggling, terrorism and its funding, materials associated with weapons of mass destruction, conflict minerals and human trafficking. It should be emphasized that not every illegal border event is a threat to international peace and security.

There is no denying that the global consumerist and speculation-driven capitalist system — which punishes the world's poor and vulnerable while feeding the unbridled quest for short-term, immoral financial gain — is the root cause of illicit transborder flows. Some experts recognize that such crimes are the Achilles' heel of capitalism. The decadent capitalism of today — brutal, inhuman and nature-despoiling — is the systemic basis of transnational crime. A system that ever more concentrates wealth, without any regard to ethics, is a Petri dish for such crimes.

Despite the grave economic and financial crisis, attempts are made to resuscitate the system through inhumane neoliberal policies that deepen the inequality gap in the world. The system and its drivers have no regard for democracy, nations, culture, ethical values or sovereignty. Illicit flows are part of the quest for financial gain without regard to fundamental human values.

An automatic link is alleged between illicit flows and the proliferation of nuclear and conventional arms, terrorism, organized crime and other destabilizing factors. We challenge the attempt to merge various illicit flows with different and distinct illegal activities. We stress the need for separate issues to be dealt with in different and specific ways, within the framework of national policies and laws.

It is essential to recall that it is the purview of sovereign States to determine and implement border security measures. In that regard, we reiterate the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in matters that fall within the exclusive domestic domain of States, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

Article 15 of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stipulates that

> "The State is responsible for establishing an overall policy on land, island and maritime borders, to preserve territorial integrity, sovereignty, security, defence, national identity, diversity and the environment, in keeping with cultural, economic and social development and national integration."

In Venezuela we have a constitutional and legislative framework, legitimated by the sovereign will of the people as expressed in referendums, which allows no means of decision-making other than approval or rejection by the people themselves through constitutional mechanisms. They cannot be circumvented by any multilateral initiative or by the Security Council.

My country has always taken a strong position against the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Thousands such weapons have been confiscated in Venezuela, as never before in our nation's history. Venezuela acknowledges the problem posed by the manufacture and illicit trade in such weapons in all its aspects in many regions of the world. We agree with the need to establish controls, in particular by producer countries, so that the supply of such weapons is limited to Governments and their authorized bodies, in accordance with international law, in particular the right to self-defence, enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we underscore the importance of effectively implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

My country is concerned about the transfer of weapons to non-State actors without the authorization of Governments. The illicit transfer to subversive elements and illegal armed groups, which threatens the legitimate peace and stability of Governments, has already led to the proliferation of illegal weapons in various regions and is destabilizing neighbouring countries.

Today's neocolonialist and imperialist wars and policies seeking to plunder the natural resources of developing countries are causing people more poverty, inequality and suffering. That is producing diasporas that are particularly vulnerable, and therefore susceptible to becoming involved in illicit cross-border flows. Meanwhile, the security agencies of imperialist Powers often defend, protect and finance major national or international drug barons and terrorist and criminal networks in order to promote their subversive agendas against sovereign nations.

If we truly want to reduce or combat the tragic consequences of cross-border illicit flows, it would suffice to put an end to the voracious appetite of neoliberalism, its transnational companies and the imperialist and colonialist policies that give rise to poverty, and to stop economic, political and social inequalities in the world.

In conclusion, we would like to state that it is auspicious that the vast majority of countries participating in today's debate have reaffirmed that, under the principles of equality, political independence and territorial integrity, only sovereign States are competent to draft and implement measures on the security of their borders.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the United States delegation for convening this open debate.

Today's debate is certainly of special importance to all States throughout the world, in particular those of North Africa and the Sahara and Sahel regions, since border security is a major challenge for all of them. Trafficking in all kinds of goods across the borders of those countries is rooted far back in history. Many people in those countries live off illegal trading carried out by organized groups. However, it must be said that trafficking has now become an alarming phenomenon that genuinely threatens the security of those States, Libya first and foremost among them. The activities of illegal organized groups are no longer limited to trafficking in drugs or persons; they are deployed as a major weapon in the competition among traffickers.

A ministerial meeting of the States concerned held in my country last March produced the Tripoli plan of action on cooperation among the countries of the region, which was subsequently submitted to the Secretariat for publication as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We regret the fact that, to date, the plan has not still been issued.

What we have seen take place in Mali in recent days is truly alarming. The declaration of the Azawad State in the north not only means the ethnic division of that African country, but also constitutes a real threat to the security of all States in North Africa and the Sahel and Sahara regions. We are all aware that extremist and terrorist armed groups have coalesced in the areas controlled by those separatists, who were trained and provided with weapons and funds by the Al-Qadhafi regime. Al-Qadhafi recruited thousands of mercenaries from the four corners of the world in order to help him to suppress the Libyan people, who had risen up against his regime. He spent money on them, armed them to the teeth and even went as far as granting them Libyan citizenship.

After the collapse of his regime, those same mercenaries fled and took weapons and money with them to neighbouring African States. They are currently working with the last remaining supporters of the Libyan regime, in particular with Al-Qadhafi's son Saadi, who is living in Niger, so as to generate anarchy, murder and instability in Libya and neighbouring countries. In fact, they are cooperating with Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, as well as with extremist groups in desert areas. They have also made public their plans to destabilize the region. The interview given to the Al-Arabiya network by Al-Qadhafi's son on 10 February is clear proof of that. A journalist who recently visited Niger met with Saadi Al-Qadhafi and some of his close military supporters also indicated the same thing, stating that Al-Qadhafi had stated that he was planning to establish an Islamic State in the region.

Securing borders in that very sensitive region is a basic national responsibility. It also requires that States

of the region and the international community make efforts to prevent terrorism, trafficking and illegal migration. It is our hope that the competent bodies of the United Nations will accord due importance to these problems. It is also our hope that the United Nations will support the Tripoli plan of action, which was adopted by the countries of the region, by providing assistance in the consolidation of institutions and capacity-building in the countries concerned, because security in that region, the Sahel and Sahara and North African countries, is a fundamental pillar of international security.

Libya, whose people defeated Al-Qadhafi and his regime, cannot on their own protect their lengthy borders against illicit cross-border movements, particularly clandestine migration and illicit trafficking in weapons and drugs. To that end, we are striving to promote closer cooperation with our neighbours and are mobilizing all our potential to address that threat.

We therefore call on all States and international organizations to cooperate with the Libyan authorities in pursuing Al-Qadhafi's sons and his die-hard supporters and mercenaries, because they are the main factors of instability in the region. They must be arrested and brought to justice. We hope that all States that are hosting on their territory senior officials of the Al-Qadhafi regime realize that they are hosting time bombs that could blow up at any time on their own territory, with very negative consequences for their stability followed by serious repercussions on their neighbouring countries.

Border control and the prevention of illegal cross-border trafficking is the joint responsibility of neighbouring States. It requires the promotion of cooperation and coordination as well as the exchange of information and experience so as to ensure common security.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. António.

Mr. António: At the outset, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your country's accession to the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you for having invited the African Union (AU) to be a part of this important discussion on the critical issue of securing borders against illicit flows.

The developments taking place on various continents today, particularly on the African continent, bring into focus the ever-present danger of uncontrolled borders and the attendant challenges of illicit activities that include the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, terrorist networks and human and drug trafficking, as well as piracy, especially off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Guinea.

The question of border security has been high on the agenda of African leaders, who are determined to ensure that borders play a constructive rather than a destructive role in promoting unity, peace, security and stability on the continent. Accordingly, the African Union adopted a border programme that is undergirded by a number of political and legal instruments, aimed at guiding further action in the management of border issues in Africa. The programme also focuses on the centrality of the principle of the respect of borders existing on achievement of national independence, as enshrined in the Charter of the then Organization of African Unity (OAU); the resolution adopted by the first ordinary session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Cairo in July 1964; and article 4 (b) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

The goal of the AU border programme is to comprehensively address border issues with respect to both delimitation and demarcation, as well as cross-border cooperation, with the overall objective of contributing to the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of integration.

The crises we are currently witnessing in Mali and in other parts of the Sahel region of Africa, in Guinea-Bissau and between the Sudan and South Sudan; piracy off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Guinea; and the increased scale of activities by terrorist and criminal groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army are manifest threats to peace, stability and sustainable development. Indeed, this was clearly recognized and addressed by the African Union Peace and Security Council at its meeting held yesterday at the ministerial level in Addis Ababa. The Ministers considered the report of the AU Chairperson, which, inter alia, highlighted the fact that Guinea-Bissau had become a hub for drug trafficking, posing a serious threat to regional security and stability.

In the case of Mali, the report, while pointing out that the situation is a serious violation of one of the fundamental principles of the African Union, notably respect for the borders existing at the time of

independence and the unity and territorial integrity of Member States, also noted the increase in the number of attacks by armed groups including Harakat Ansar ed-Din al-Salafiya (Ansar Eddine), Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Most notable is MUJAO, a dissident branch of AQIM that brings together elements of different terrorist and criminal groups from the region, including Boko Haram. According to the Chairperson's report, the prevailing situation in Mali has provided AQIM with greater latitude to pursue its terrorist activities, including the kidnapping of hostages for purposes of collecting a ransom.

Regarding the situation between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, the African Union, through its High-level Implementation Panel, has continued to facilitate negotiations between the two parties on post-referendum and post-secession arrangements. Unfortunately, and as noted by the AU Chairperson in his report, the relations between the Sudan and South Sudan have deteriorated sharply in recent weeks, with intense fighting between the armies of the two countries, mostly in and around Heglig. The AU Chairperson further noted that the current situation, which also calls into question respect for the AU principle on pre-existing borders, had poisoned relations between the two countries, generating a humanitarian crisis, undermining the viability of both States, further jeopardizing the security of the entire region and further testing the universally accepted objective of two viable States living side by side in peace.

The illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons continues to pose serious threats and challenges on the continent and calls for a strengthening of the capacity of African countries to implement subregional and continental legally binding instruments such as the Bamako Declaration on small arms and light weapons, among others.

Mr. President, these ongoing situations on the continent are the best illustration of the relevance of your country's initiative to inscribe this critical issue on the agenda of the Security Council this month — an issue that, we believe, can be tackled only through concerted regional and international efforts, including by building on existing regional and international mechanisms and instruments.

The African Union stands ready to cooperate for the realization of this objective.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Savinykh (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus has always ensured a high level of protection for State borders. Belarus is a reliable barrier to illegal migration, the movement of terrorists and the transit of weapons, drugs and their precursors. Given its geographical location, Belarus has significantly expanded the resources and efforts that it devotes to protecting State borders. The effectiveness of those measures can be felt fully by other countries in the region.

An example of that work was the recent disruption of a network of trafficking in women, undertaken jointly with INTERPOL and British law enforcement agencies. A broad series of measures was also implemented, alongside Ukraine, to ensure security around the European Football Championship. Belarus is also cooperating productively with the Collective Security Treaty Organization to protect common borders. In this context, Belarus could be called a regional exporter of security.

In order to safeguard security along its entire border, the Republic of Belarus is taking steps to ensure that separate parts of the border no longer receive unequal treatment in terms of protection. To this end, we are redeploying resources to staff and equip the southern border control. That is extremely important because Belarus lies on the main transport routes not only between the East and the West but also between the North and the South.

I would like to support and respond to the interesting and important idea expressed by the delegations of the United States of America and Norway. I call attention to the work of the Committee on Trade of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The Committee's work on trade standards and information and communications technology infrastructure development has allowed us to promote transparency in all international trade exchanges and decrease the related financial and temporal costs. We see a genuine possibility of concluding this work in the near future in the Eurasian Economic Commission, which has begun its work this year as the executive body of a common economic space for Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia.

The Economic Commission for Europe plans, through the Committee on Trade, to discuss the future possibility of establishing a universal, pan-European system for supporting and monitoring trade operations. Such a system would enhance the transparency and security of all trade flows, removing excessive bureaucratic obstacles to business.

Belarus intends to continue to act as an effective guarantor of the security of borders in the interests of the entire region. We note that the expenses involved in this area continue to rise. In this connection, and also given the need to ensure capacity-building for border protection in light of rising threats, we appeal to our partners to offer practical cooperation and support for protecting our borders.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Nkoloi (Botswana): My delegation shares concerns about the significant work that still needs to be done in the area of preventing illicit flows across borders. Addressing this problem is of particular relevance to Botswana, as it is to the African continent as a whole. We therefore thank the United States delegation for convening this open debate during its presidency of the Security Council.

Botswana believes that the concerted efforts of the international community are required to address the problem of illicit cross-border flows, including of small arms and light weapons, weapons of mass destruction, human trafficking, particularly trafficking in women and children, drugs, illicit minerals and wildlife trophies, terrorists, fugitives and illicit financial transfers. My delegation views such activities as serious threats that undermine efforts aimed at achieving sustainable economic and social development.

Transnational organized crime and terrorism are global in nature, and we believe that any meaningful effort to counter such activities should involve giving special attention to improving border control, immigration and customs security. Botswana supports stronger and more robust cooperation to prevent and combat illicit flows at the national, regional and global levels. We also support a comprehensive approach which we believe would save both time and costs in the global effort to stem illicit flows.

My delegation strongly believes that the international community should join efforts in prioritizing border control in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We look forward to consideration of this subject during the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which will be held in August 2012.

Botswana also places a high premium on the conclusion of an arms trade treaty in July 2012 as an effective and balanced, legally-binding instrument of the highest possible common, international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. We will support an arms trade treaty, the implementation of which shall include closer international cooperation and assistance in the prevention of illicit flows across borders.

Botswana appreciates the assistance it has received from the United Nations system, as well as from bilateral partners, towards the strengthening of its border control, immigration and customs security. We therefore look forward to the report of the Secretary-General later this year, which will provide a comprehensive assessment of the United Nations efforts to assist Member States to counter illicit flows.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Adi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation adds its voice to the opinions expressed in the letter sent yesterday by the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement to the President of the Security Council.

The Security Council is debating this issue at a time when Syria is under terrorist attack, enabled by the trafficking of arms and fighters who seek to destabilize and damage security, destroy public and private property, and undertake terrorist and sabotage operations against civilians and the military alike. My country has sent dozens of letters to the Security-General and the Council, in which it has underlined the threat posed by the trafficking of arms and combatants across borders with neighbouring countries to the stability and security of Syria.

Yesterday, we sent a letter to the Council containing the names of a number of detainees of Arab

nationalities, most of whom carried out terrorist acts in Syria, while others trafficked weapons into Syria. They all entered Syria illegally through borders with neighbouring States. Investigations have shown that most of those detained belong to Al-Qaida and have been given fatwas calling for extremist acts and practices. The Security Council should send a clear message to those who stand behind such acts, States and groups alike, to cease and desist.

My delegation today heard the statement by the representative of Israel. In this context, I would like to state that such accusations and lies cannot replace the evident truth. That is clear to all, as Israel is the main source of instability in the region because of its continuing occupation of Arab land and the Syrian Golan.

It is indeed shameful for the representative of Israel to accuse others instead of apologizing to the international community for an abhorrent history of aggression, including the Israeli army's use of millions of cluster bombs against Southern Lebanon on the very same day that the Council adopted resolution 1701 (2006) demanding an end to Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

It is well-known that the main traffickers of conventional weapons in the world, particularly illicit weapons, are retired Israeli military officers working for Israeli weapons manufacturers and industries. It is clear that the Israel representative's statement contradicts his country's actions, since Israel's involvement in the illicit trafficking of weapons across the globe encourages international terrorism and protects drug traffickers and secessionist movements around the world. Indeed, international gangs led by some Israeli religious figures are now trafficking children's organs.

Finally, acts of international aggression, occupation and piracy by Israeli cannot be hidden from the international community.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.